

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 25, 2012

The Honorable Frank D. Lucas  
Chairman  
House Committee on Agriculture  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin C. Peterson  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Agriculture  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Peterson,

As you develop legislation to reauthorize the Farm Bill, we respectfully request that you give full and fair consideration to the research, pest management, and trade assistance programs that are vital to the specialty crop producers we represent. Understanding the need for deficit reduction and the tremendous fiscal pressure that the Committee on Agriculture is under, these programs are critical because they enable our growers to compete in the global marketplace and contribute to producing our \$44 billion agriculture trade surplus.

**Pest Management**

In order for our growers and processors to continue to compete in the global marketplace, they must be equipped with the tools necessary to stay ahead of ever-evolving pests and diseases. Through programs such as the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program and the National Clean Plant Network, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and their state partners can effectively prevent, manage, and eradicate invasive pests before they reach a devastating level – keeping American produce pest-free and preserving access to international markets.

**Research**

As you know, the private sector contributes significant financial resources to agricultural research, creating a successful partnership among growers, states, and the federal government. This partnership has proven effective in giving our growers the cutting edge tools they need to address pests and diseases and remain competitive in the global marketplace. The Specialty Crop Research Initiative and the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program have been particularly beneficial for specialty crop growers in all 50 states in helping address specific challenges as they arise in areas ranging from food safety to production methods. The important work done by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the Agricultural Research Service, are also critical to helping growers stay ahead of their international competitors, comply with federal and state regulations, and address new threats from pest and disease.

### Trade Assistance

While great improvements have been made in many export areas, the United States continues to import more specialty crops than it exports. However, the success of the Market Access Program (MAP) and the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) program demonstrate that targeted assistance to growers can turn this trend around. These programs address the technical barriers to trade and the challenges inherent to opening new markets. A 2010 study found that every federal dollar invested in MAP – including private matching funds of up to 60 percent from industry dollars – nets an additional \$35 in agricultural exports and \$6.1 billion in annual economic activity for our nation's rural communities. This success should be continued in the 2012 Farm Bill.

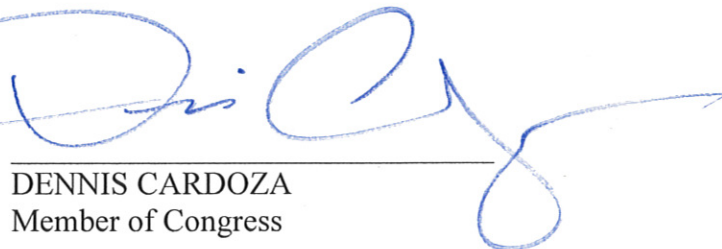
As you know, specialty crops include all fruits, vegetables, nuts, horticultural and nursery crops. More than 250 different types of specialty crops are grown in the United States, representing 22 percent of total cash receipts for United States agriculture. These products are an important part of a healthy diet, and programs like the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program and the Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program – which are funded through the Commodity Credit Corporation and not the general treasury – have gone a long way to increase access to fresh fruit and vegetables among school children. Unlike commodity crops, specialty crop producers and processors do not receive federal subsidies.

We fully recognize the fiscal challenges that our nation is facing, and support efforts to address our nation's deficit. However, as you set funding priorities for the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, we respectfully request that you give full consideration to these research, pest and disease management, and trade assistance programs. These relatively low cost programs returns high yields for both producers and consumers in the U.S. and worldwide.

Sincerely,



DOC HASTINGS  
Member of Congress



DENNIS CARDOZA  
Member of Congress



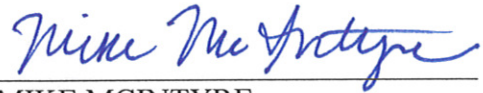
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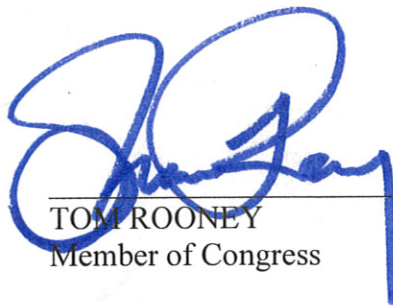
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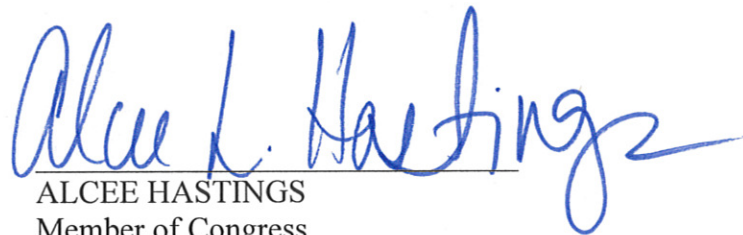
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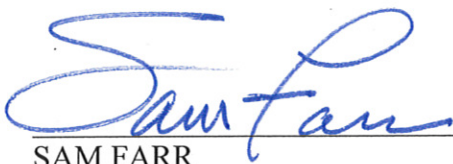
DEVIN NUNES  
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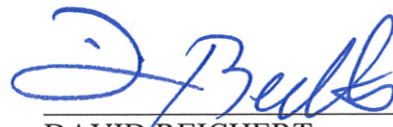
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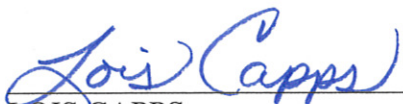
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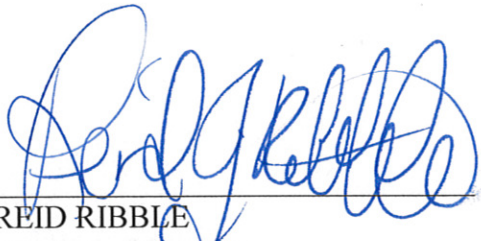
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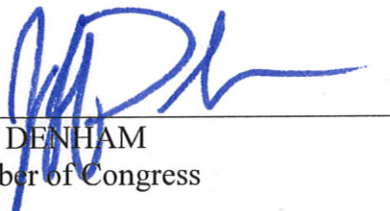
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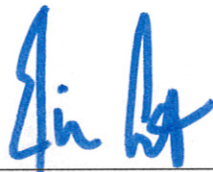
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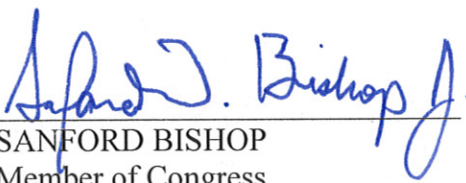
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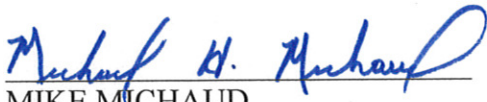
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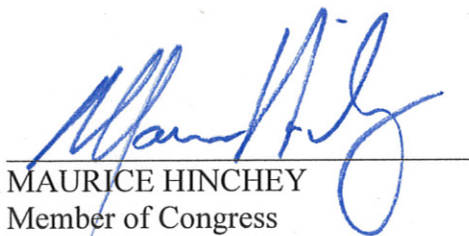
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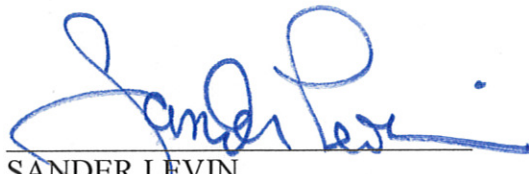
  
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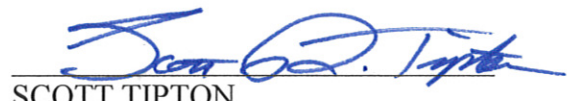
  
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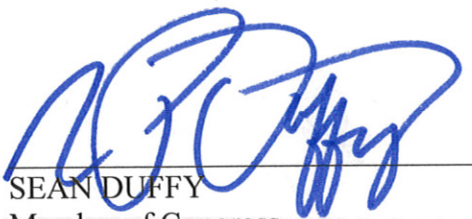
  
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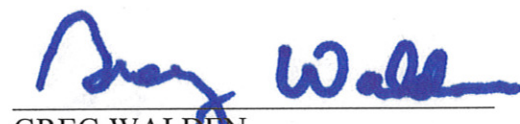
  
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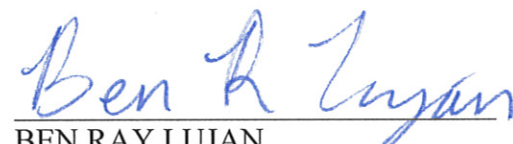
  
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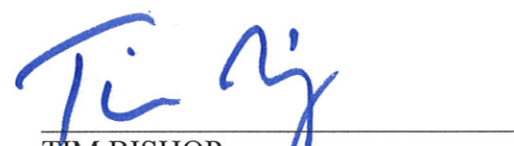
  
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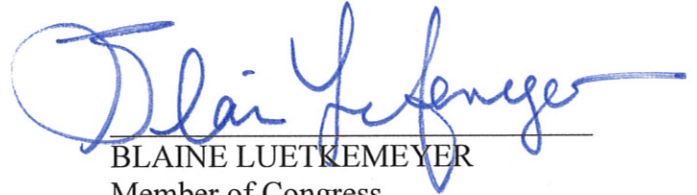
RON KIND  
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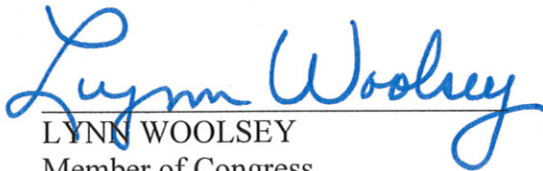
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EARL BLUMENAUER  
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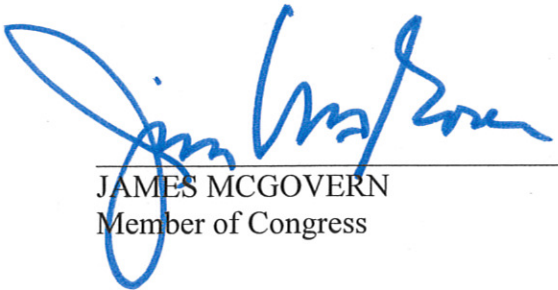
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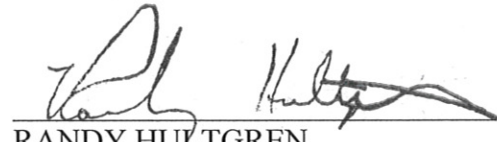
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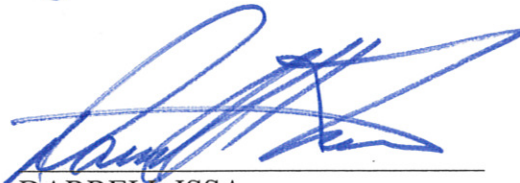
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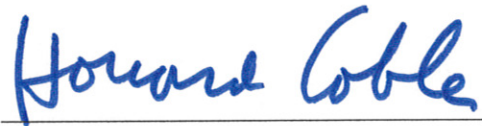
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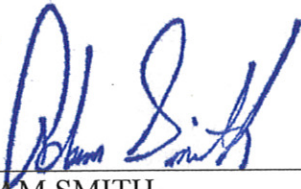
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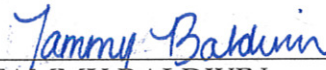
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ANDY HARRIS  
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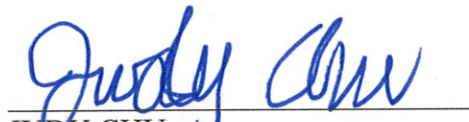
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RUSS CARNAHAN  
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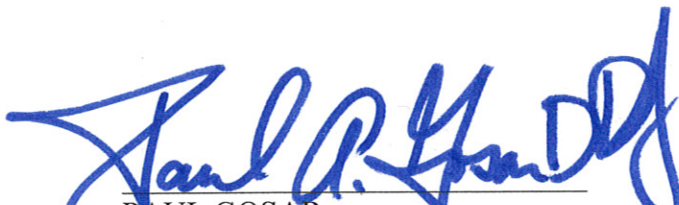
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FRANCISCO "QUICO" CANSECO  
Member of Congress



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HANSEN CLARKE  
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PAUL GOSAR  
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